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for

October, 1942

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Vol. V

Record Supplement for October, 1942

No. 10

ARENSKY (ANTON STEPANOVICH)

ARENSKY: Suite for Two Pianos, Opus 15—Waltz & MENDELSSOHN: A Midsummer Night's Dream—Scherzo (arr. Phillip). Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson (pianos). 12" record (2 sides) No. C-71398D; price \$1.05.

Among the unfortunately limited literature of music for two pianos, Arensky's Suite, Opus 15, has long had an honorable place. It is not music expanded in order to give four hands something to occupy them, but music conceived for the two-piano medium. Years ago, Bartlett and Robertson made a recording of the Waltz from this Suite (G-B3634, coupled with the Dvorák Slavonic Dance No. 15). Now they have re-recorded it under modern conditions, and the result is most attractive light music. Their playing, in this selection, and in a brilliant arrangement of the Scherzo from A Midsummer Night's Dream, is perhaps more notable for tonal variety and high spirits than for perfect synchronization. But their dash and vigor are accompanied by such musicianly feeling that a few failures to keep together may easily be overlooked. The recording is entirely adequate.

BACH (JOHANN SEBASTIAN)

BACH: Chorale ("Jesu, joy of man's desiring") from Cantata 147 (arr. for three hands by Hambourg) & Christmas Oratorio—Pastorale. Mark and Michal Hambourg (piano). 10" imported record (2 sides) No. G-B2876; price \$1.57.

We relist at this time one of the best piano arrangements of the ever-popular "Jesu, joy of man's desiring," originally—in Bach's cantata *Herz und Mund*—a chorale setting for chorus accompanied by string orchestra and solo oboe. In this arrangement, for three hands at one piano, it is much closer than in most transcriptions to the original in harmony and in the distinctness of the contrapuntal strands. The obverse of the record is taken up by a solo-piano transcription of the lovely *Sinfonie*—or *Chorale*, or *Shepherds' Christmas Music*—from the *Christmas Oratorio*. The playing is well conceived and finely executed, and the recording, though now seven or eight years old, is faithful and wide as to range.

BACH: St. John Passion—Ach, mein Sinn. Julius Patzak (tenor), with Berlin State Opera Orchestra, conducted by Alois Melichar. 10" imported record (2 sides) No. D-P05135; price 79c.

Few musical combinations are rarer than that of a voice capable of singing Bach with the requisite taste and artistry. Aside from the most endemic operas, there can be only a half-dozen big works that have survived as many poor and mediocre performances as have the two extant Bach Passions. In this fine record, the pure tenor of Julius Patzak, perfectly adapted to the occasion, is used with aptness to project one of the most beautiful passages from the less familiar of the Passions. Mr. Patzak is not merely singing—he is singing a text that has a meaning. Given exactly the right sort of support by the orchestra, he restores to *Ach, mein Sinn* the profound beauty that it has always kept, but of which it has too often been temporarily robbed by thoughtless tenors.

ARTUR SCHNABEL ON RECORDS

During the musical season of 1921-22, a thirty-nine-year-old Austrian pianist who was exceedingly well known in Germany and England visited America without causing many hats to be thrown into the air. He was an earnest man with an air of dedication to his art, and played the piano in an intense, scholarly manner. In 1933, he returned to the United States to take part in a Brahms Festival of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He became a highly respected, but hardly an electrifying, name. In 1935, however, in a series of seven concerts at Carnegie Hall, New York, Artur Schnabel, at the age of fifty-three, became one of the undeniable luminaries by playing all thirty-two of Beethoven's Piano Sonatas as many music-lovers believed they had never been played before. Since that date, an exile from his native land, he has become an appreciable influence in American musical life.

Most renowned for his thorough, scholarly, and understanding performances of Beethoven, Schnabel has seemed to some to excel particularly in Schubert, and in other music of less dramatic grandeur than the late Beethoven Sonatas. Still others have found him at his best in the two Brahms Concertos. He has always (unconsciously, through the definiteness of his standards and the unmistakable individuality of his playing) aroused the most intense sort of admiration (adoration would not be too strong a word) and, on the other side, something like vituperation. Scarcely anyone remains calm in the face of a Schnabel reading. His views on music have been pithily set forth in two small books, *Reflections on Music* (1934) and *Music and the Line of Most Resistance*. (1942). He has composed, and some of his compositions are of an experimental nature that would astonish the more conservative among his admirers. He has edited the Beethoven Piano Sonatas and (with Karl Flesch) the Violin Sonatas of Mozart and Brahms. His wife, Therese Behr (see last recording listed below) was long a lieder-singer of prominence, and his son Karl Ulrich Schnabel is, like his father, both pianist and composer. The list of Schnabel pupils contains several pianists of prominence.

Artur Schnabel has long been a prolific contributor to record lists—HMV and Victor. The following is a complete list of the Schnabel records current—though not, under wartime conditions, always in stock. It is a little short of tragedy that the first two volumes of his complete recording of the Beethoven Piano Sonatas have been discontinued. However, the remaining thirteen volumes, which include many smaller pieces besides, are one of the monumental achievements of the gramophone.

THE SCHNABEL RECORDINGS

BACH

Concerto, C major, two pianos and orchestra—with Karl Ulrich Schnabel and the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. VM-257†; price \$3.67.

Italian Concerto, F Major. VM-806†; price \$2.72.

Toccatà and Fugue, C minor & Toccatà and Fugue, D Major. VM-532†; price \$3.67.

BEETHOVEN

Bagatelles, see below, SOCIETY VOL. XIV and XV.

Concerto No. 1, C major, Opus 15—with London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Malcolm Sargent. VM-158†; price \$5.77. (Odd side contains Für Elise.)

Concerto No. 2, B flat major, Opus 19—with London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Malcolm Sargent. VM-295†; price \$4.72.

Concerto No. 3, C minor, Opus 37—with London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Malcolm Sargent. VM-194†; price \$5.77. (Odd side contains Rondo, C major, Opus 51, No. 1.)

Concerto No. 4, G major, Opus 58—with London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Malcolm Sargent. VM-156†; price \$4.72.

Concerto No. 5 ("Emperor"), E flat major, Opus 73—with London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Malcolm Sargent. VM-155†; price \$5.77.

Fantasia, G minor, see below, SOCIETY VOL. XIV.

Für Elise (Bagatelle, A minor) & Rondo, C major, Opus 51, No. 1. V-14322; price \$1.05.

SCHNABEL RECORDINGS (Continued)

Minuet, E flat major, see below, SOCIETY VOL. XV.

Rondo, A major, see below, SOCIETY VOL. XIV.

Rondo, C major, Opus 51, No. 1 & Für Elise. V-14322; price \$1.05.

Rondo a Capriccio, Opus 129, see below, SOCIETY VOL. XIV.

Sonatas for piano alone, see below, BEETHOVEN PIANO SONATA SOCIETY.

Sonata, G minor, Opus 5, No. 2, for piano and cello—with Gregor Piatigorsky. VM-281†; price \$3.67.

Variations (Opus 34, Opus 35, & Diabelli), see below, SOCIETY VOL. XIV and XV.

BEETHOVEN PIANO SONATA SOCIETY (all imported records except Vol. X).

Vol I and Vol II discontinued, no longer available. (Contained Sonatas Nos. 9, 13, 24, 27, 30, 32.)

Vol III—Sonatas No. 15 ("Pastorale"), 19, 31; price \$18.38.

Vol. IV—Sonatas Nos. 2, 14 ("Moonlight"), 26 ("Les Adieux"); price \$18.38.

Vol. V—Sonatas Nos. 11, 20, 23 ("Appassionata"); price \$18.38.

Vol. VI—Sonatas Nos. 18, 6, 8 ("Pathétique"); price \$18.38.

Vol. VII—Sonatas Nos. 1, 10, 28; price \$18.38.

Vol. VIII—Sonatas Nos. 3, 17 ("Tempest"), 22; price \$18.38.

Vol. IX—Sonatas Nos. 12 ("Funeral March"), 21 ("Waldstein"); price \$14.72.

Vol. X—(VM-403†) Sonata No. 29 ("Hammerklavier").

Vol. XI—Sonatas Nos. 4, 16; price \$18.38.

Vol. XII—Sonatas Nos. 5, 7, 25; price \$15.72.

Vol. XIII—Diabelli Variations; price \$18.38.

Vol. XIV—Sig Bagatelles, Opus 126; Fantasia, G minor, Opus 77; Rondo a Capriccio, G major, Opus 129; Rondo, A major; Variations, F minor, Opus 34; price \$18.38.

Vol. XV—Seven Bagatelles, Opus 33; Für Elise; Minuet, E flat major; Variations, E flat major ("Eroica"), Opus 35; price \$18.38.

BRAHMS

Concerto No. 1, D minor, Opus 15—with London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Georg Szell. VM-667†; price \$6.82.

Concerto No. 2, B flat major, Opus 83—with BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. VM-305†; price \$6.82.

DVORAK

Quintet, A major, Opus 81—with Pro Arte Quartet. VM-219; price \$4.72.

MOZART

Concerto No. 19, F major (K. 459)—with London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Malcolm Sargent. VM-389†; price \$4.20.

Concerto No. 21, C major (K. 467)—with London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Malcolm Sargent. VM-486†; price \$4.72.

Concerto No. 27, B flat major (K. 595)—with London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by John Barbirolli. VM-240†; price \$4.72.

Concerto, E flat major, for two pianos (K. 365)—with Karl Ulrich Schnabel and the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. VM-484†; price \$3.67.

Quartet, G minor (K. 478)—with members of the Pro Arte Quartet. VM-251; price \$4.72.

Sonata, A minor (K. 310). G-DB3778/80; price \$7.86.

SCHUBERT

Allegretto, C minor, see below, Sonata, B flat major.

Divertissement a la hongroise, see below, Military Marches.

March, E major, see below, Sonata, No. 10, D major.

Military Marches and Divertissement a la hongroise. G-DB3527/32; price \$15.72.

Moments Musicaux, Opus 94 (Nos. 1-6). VM-684; price \$3.67.

Quintet, A major ("Forellen")—with Hobday and members of the Pro Arte Quartet. VM-312†; price \$5.77.

Sonata, A major, posthumous. VM-580†; price \$5.25.

Sonata, B flat major, posthumous & Allegretto, C minor. G-DB3741/5; price \$13.10.

Sonata No. 10, D major, Opus 53 & March, E major. VM-888†; price \$5.77.

... as accompanist

SCHUBERT: An die Laute; Der Musensohn, & Der Erlkönig. Therese Schnabel (contralto), with Artur Schnabel (piano). G-DB1836; price \$2.62.

BACH: St. Matthew Passion—Ich will bei meinem Jesu wachen. Julius Patzak (tenor), with choir, organ, and Berlin State Opera Orchestra, conducted by Alois Melichar. 10" imported record (2 sides) No. D-P05134; price 79c.

As in the record from the *St. John Passion* reviewed above, Julius Patzak here demonstrates perfection in the style of singing Bach's religious music. No nasal unctuousness, no disregard of the implications of the words sung, no disrespect for pitch mars his intensely concentrated singing. Those interested in the appropriate setting of text, incidentally, would do well to listen sharply to the first line of this excerpt, noting the special treatment given to the word "Jesu." Organ and orchestra are recorded well, and in beautiful proportion to the volume of the voice. For sheer beauty, both of music and of performance, this record might be taken as a model.

BACH: Suite No. 1, G major. Danish Quartet (Gilbert Jespersen, flute; Erling Bloch, violin; Torben Svendsen, cello, and Lund-Christiansen, piano). 12" imported record (2 sides) No. G-DB5221; price \$2.62.

On examination, the composition on this most attractive record turns out to be the *Trio Sonata, G Major* (for flute, violin, and figured bass). Unlike the Victor recording by the Moyse Trio (V-13591), in which the figured bass is realized by the piano, this is a true transcription for quartet. It is sensitively, almost reverently, played. The recording, transferred to the superb HMV surface, is of the very best. Enthusiasts for the many-faceted art of Bach will find it something out of the ordinary, and it will give music-lovers in general music to enjoy and enjoy again.

BARBER (SAMUEL)

BARBER: Adagio for Strings. NBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Arturo Toscanini. 12" record No. V-11-8287; price \$1.05.

To be released on or about October 15th, this record will be reviewed in the November SUPPLEMENT.

BEETHOVEN (LUDWIG VAN)

BEETHOVEN: Quartet No. 11, F minor, Opus 95. Budapest Quartet. Three 12" records (6 sides) in Set CM-519†; price complete with album \$3.67.

It is probable that those who have heard any of the earlier Beethoven Quartets recorded by the Budapest Quartet will neither need nor want further word about this new set than the fact that it is now available. It is, as to performance, in no way less admirable than the preceding sets, and the recording continues to set a new standard for American string-quartet pressings.

About the music itself there are a few remarks of special interest to be made. That Bible of chamber music, Cobbett, refuses to put its stamp of approval on the Quartet No. 11, F minor. In its four relatively brief movements, Beethoven strayed far indeed from orthodox conceptions of key-relationship and stylistic integrity. The second movement, for example, is in D major, a key improperly—or not at all—related to F minor, the supposedly predominant key of the entire quartet. But it is the final movement—an *allegretto agitato* in rondo form—that caused Cobbett's Beethoven authority, in this case no less a person than Vincent D'Indy, to condemn the work. Of the F major coda, Mr. D'Indy wrote: "One might imagine it some light Rossinian operatic finale which had strayed into this atmosphere of sustained beauty, and we think that no interpretation could palliate this error of a genius." The four members of the Budapest Quartet nullify this assertion, for if the "error" needed palliation, their interpretation would suffice. To less austere minds than D'Indy's, however, that offending coda will appear merely as the preternaturally apt close to a wholly delightful work.

BIZET (GEORGES)

BIZET: Carmen—Air de fleur & FLOTOW: Martha—M'appari. Jan Kiepura (tenor, in French), with orchestra conducted by Robert Armbruster. 12" record (2 sides) No. C-71397D; price \$1.05.

Jan Kiepura once had a beautiful voice. Indeed, some of the beauty of that voice as such survives today. But his way of using it, forcing it to the point of strangulation, has now become a mannerism so fixed that it makes listening to him painful rather than pleasant. His gulping and sobbing in both the *Carmen* selection (sung, as composed, in French) and that from *Martha* (sung in French translation) would be humorous if they were not depressing. The recording is overbrilliant, and there would seem to have been some disagreement between Mr. Kiepura and Mr. Armbruster, who leads the accompanying orchestra, as to tempo. Altogether, this record does no credit to those involved in its production.

DOHNANYI (ERNST VON)

DOHNANYI: Rhapsody, E flat major; Rhapsody, C major; Etude, E major. Miklos Schwalb (piano). Two 12" records (4 sides) in Set BA-3; price complete with de luxe folder \$3.68.

A pupil of Dohnanyi, Miklos Schwalb may be supposed to play his master's works with insight and authority. Of the three pieces here recorded, the most rewarding is the *Rhapsody, C major*, based on the *Dies irae*. (How many composers quote this section of the ancient *Missa pro defunctis*? Berlioz, Verdi, Liszt, Rachmaninoff, and Ernest

Schelling come to mind at once.) The other music, while attractive virtuoso matter, curiously lacks individuality, sounding alternately like Schumann, Brahms, and Rachmaninoff. All the selections on these two records are badly under-recorded on surfaces far from smooth. The result is that in order to produce sufficient audibility on an ordinary gramophone, we must turn up the volume control to the point at which surface noise quarrels with piano tone for first place. Mr. Schwalb appears to be extremely capable, and it is to be hoped that he will soon be awarded first-class recording.

ELGAR (SIR EDWARD)

ELGAR: *Falstaff*, Opus 68. London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Edward Elgar. Four 12" imported records (8 sides) in Set G-H155; price complete with album \$10.50.

It was for the Leeds Festival held in October, 1913, that Sir Edward Elgar composed his *Falstaff*, an orchestral work that, with painstaking exactness, he labeled "Symphonic Study with Two Interludes." It was based solely on the character of Falstaff as presented by Shakespeare in *Henry IV* (both parts) and *Henry V*, and not on the seemingly different character revealed in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

We relist at this time, because we have a limited supply on hand, the excellent records of this highly interesting music made by the London Symphony Orchestra under the composer's direction. Elgar enthusiasts probably are acquainted with them already. But those who may have been judging England's most prominent modern composer on the insufficient grounds of the *Pomp and Circumstance* Marches, or even the *Enigma Variations*, have a delight in store in *Falstaff*, which is of a deeper and more Protean quality. Elgar's orchestral mastery has become axiomatic. In *Falstaff*, it was joined to materials of wide scope and rich musical invention. The recording shows almost no sign of age, as it was of the very highest HMV standard.

FLOTOW: *Martha*—*M'appari*, see **BIZET:** *Carmen*—*Air de fleur*.

GLAZUNOV (ALEXANDER KONSTANTINOVICH)

GLAZUNOV: *Overture on Greek Themes, No. 1*, Opus 3. Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos. Two 12" records (4 sides) in Set C-X228; price complete with album \$2.62.

Between his sixteenth and nineteenth years, Glazunov, then a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov, composed two potpourri overtures based on Greek themes. Although he is often called the last member of the Russian nationalist school—he lived from 1865 to 1936—Glazunov was actually no more nationalistic than Tchaikovsky, and is perhaps more

accurately described, like Arensky and Rachmaninoff, as a minor member of the westernizing Russian group headed by Tchaikovsky. His tuneful, well-organized, and suave music never offends and seldom delights for more than two or three hearings. One of his works is likely to sound like another, whether composed in 1881 or 1912. As the notes accompanying this recording of the *Overture on Greek Themes, No. 1* state, "Its definitely 19th Century character, its lack of venturesomeness, of high originality, supply the reasons no doubt, for its recent comparative neglect by performers."

Mitropoulos, himself a Greek, gives the Glazunov work an emotional and high-tensioned rendition. The orchestra sounds well, and the recording is in the main excellent. What faults it has derive naturally from Mitropoulos' excessively mannered conducting rather than from neglect on the part of the recording engineers.

GLINKA: *Kamarinskaya*, see **MUSSORGSKY:** *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

IPOLITOV-IVANOV (MIKHAIL MIKHAILOVICH)

IPOLITOV-IVANOV: *Caucasian Sketches*, Opus 10 & **RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** *Tsar Saltan—Flight of the Bumble Bee*, Act III. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Alois Melichar. Three 10" imported records (6 sides) Nos. D-P05069/70 & 5092; price \$2.37.

Ipolitov-Ivanov, who died in Moscow in 1935, greatly honored by the government of the U.S.S.R., was a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov. Although he was prolific in instrumental music, operas, cantatas, chamber music, songs, and choral works, he seems likely to be remembered outside Russia by the *Caucasian Sketches* alone, a suite of four orchestral pieces composed when he was thirty-five. The second of these (*In the Village*) and the fourth (*Procession of the Sirdar*) have been singled out by popular favor, but the first (*In a Mountain Pass*) and third (*In the Mosque*) are less familiar. Although not entirely up to the very latest recording standards in the matter of fidelity, this complete set is unique, and therefore valuable. The performance is excellent. The odd sixth side contains a refreshingly straightforward performance of that eternal encore gem, *Flight of the Bumble Bee* from Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *The Legend of Tsar Saltan*.

LULLY (JEAN-BAPTISTE)

LULLY: *Au clair de la lune* (arr. De la Tombelle) & **MARTINI:** *Plaisir d'amour*. Yvonne Printemps (soprano), with Mme. Peltier (harpsichord). 12" imported record (2 sides) No. G-DB1625; price \$2.62.

Its projection of the sprightly theatrical personality of Yvonne Printemps makes this an unusual record. No one would wish to claim that hers is a great, or even a very good, voice. But she sets the seal of her own style on two familiar songs with results that are far off the beaten track. She has been sensitively recorded.

MASSENET (JULES)

MASSENET: Werther — *Ces lettres* (Letter Song), Act III & SAINT-SAENS: Samson et Dalila — *Amour, viens aider ma faiblesse*, Act II. Bruna Castagna (mezzo-soprano), with Columbia Opera Orchestra, conducted by Alfredo Antonini. 12" record (2 sides) No. C-71390D; price \$1.05.

Going outside the well-thumbed repertoire of mezzo-soprano and contralto arias, Miss Castagna sings a condensed version of Charlotte's "letter song" from the third act of Massenet's pseudo-Goethean opera *Werther*. Those who wish a truly French performance of the uncut aria may find it magnificently sung by Ninon Vallin on D-25846. Although the role of Charlotte is for soprano, and Miss Castagna is a mezzo with contralto depths, she sings *Ces lettres* in the original key without difficulty. Her rich, throaty voice is generally well used, though it tends to spread on sustained loud notes. Better suited to her manner of singing is the aria in which Saint-Saens' Delilah calls upon love for assistance in overcoming Samson. This she sings with feeling, and with evident appreciation of dramatic punch. While not to be listed among the great singers of our day, Miss Castagna is a craftsmanlike artist whom it is a pleasure to hear. She has been satisfactorily accompanied and smoothly recorded.

MENDELSSOHN: A Midsummer Night's Dream—*Scherzo*, see ARENSKY: *Suite for Two Pianos*.

MIGNONE (FRANCISCO)

MIGNONE: *Tango Brasileiro; Quasi Modinha; Lenda Brasileira No. 1; Lenda Brasileira No. 2*. Two 12" records (4 sides) in Set BA-2; price complete with de luxe folder \$3.68.

Francisco Mignone, a well-known Brazilian composer, recorded four of his own compositions during a recent visit to New York. The music, allowing for slight national differences, belongs to the general type evolved in Spain by Albéniz and continued by Turina. Mr. Mignone would seem to be a sensitive pianist, but the tone on these records lacks luster, probably because they were made in an inappropriate studio or recording chamber. Like the Schwallb recordings of Dohnanyi reviewed above, these suffer from acute under-recording and consequent surface whispers. Purchasers of Bost records in the so-called de luxe folders are warned to be certain, after each playing, that the records are pushed all the way back into the folders, as otherwise edges may be snapped off the records by the mere action of closing the folder.

MOZART (WOLFGANG AMADEUS)

MOZART: Lily Pons in Mozart Arias. Lily Pons (soprano), with orchestra conducted by Bruno Walter. Three 10" records (6 sides) in Set CM-518†; price complete with album \$2.88.

In this exceedingly curious album, in addition to the *Alleluia* from the motet *Exultate, jubilate* (K. 165), Miss Pons sings the following in the languages specified:

Die Zauberflöte: Der hölle Rache (French)

Le Nozze di Figaro: Voi che sapete (French)

Die Entführung aus dem Serail: Ach, ich liebte (Italian)

Die Entführung aus dem Serail: Welche Wonne, welche Lust! (French)

The curiousness of these recordings lies both in their having been made at all and in Bruno Walter's having consented to let them go forth bearing his name. Although this reviewer does not belong to the large company of Miss Pons' admirers, he is willing to concede the worth of such of her recordings as the best in the set containing excerpts from *La Fille du régiment* (C-X206). Even in them, however—the charm of Miss Pons' appearance and stage personality being absent—the quality of her vocalization is clearly second flight. The reason for selecting her to record a brace of the most difficult arias in three Mozart operas is impossible to guess. She is utterly unsuited to the assignment. It is not merely that she wanders from the pitch, as she does in *Der hölle Rache*, sings one aria from a German opera in Italian and another from the same opera in French (both so poorly enunciated as to be incomprehensible), and sings difficult passage with effort so evident as to be disquieting. It is that she does not grasp—or at least does not project—one iota of the significance of either the music or the words she is singing. The result would be merely negligible were it not that Miss Pons' enormously publicized fame might lead the unwary to mistake what she does for true Mozart.

Mr. Walter's readings are beyond criticism except where he has had to adjust his tempos to Miss Pons. The recording does singer and orchestra full credit. Aside from reasonable mechanical excellence, nevertheless, it is impossible to discover a single count on which this inexplicable set of records can be recommended, unless it be that no other recording of *Welche Wonne, welche Lust!* is now available.

MUSSORGSKY (MODEST PETROVICH)

MUSSORGSKY: Boris Godunov—Symphonic Synthesis arranged by Leopold Stokowski. All-American Orchestra, conducted by Leopold Stokowski. Three 12" records (6 sides) in Set CM-516†; price complete with album \$3.67.

Going to the original Mussorgsky score rather than to the better-known Rimsky-Korsakov version, Stokowski some years ago arranged an all-orchestral synthesis of many of the most musically effective scenes from *Boris Godunov*. This synthesis was brilliantly recorded for Victor in 1937 by the Philadelphia Orchestra, Stokowski conducting (VM-391†). He has now re-recorded it for Columbia, this time with the All-American Orchestra. It must be said immediately that the music in this "synthesis" is not all unalloyed Mussorgsky. Not only have the separate episodes been made to flow together by means of rather Wagnerian connective material, but the orchestration itself is, in many places, as clearly Stokowski as the more familiar operatic version is Rimsky-Korsakov. This Stokowski admits: "Wherever the orchestration of Mussorgsky only partly expresses the spirit of his musical conception, I have tried to help the orchestra to say more completely what Mussorgsky was aiming to express . . ."

Mussorgsky was a very great composer, probably the most intense natural genius in the whole story of Russian music. But he was essentially a program composer—as reference to *Pictures at an Exhibition* or *A Night on Bald Mountain* will show. His operas are most notable for the roundness with which the music expresses the psychology of the protagonists and the slight shifts in the course of action. Cut away from its text, the music of *Boris Godunov* loses more than half of its greatness. The "symphonic synthesis," then, is a partially retold version of half of a story. It is highly spiced "Russian" music, but it does small justice to Mussorgsky.

The All-American Orchestra, sounding better than it has ever sounded before, is still years of experience away from the over-all suppleness and exactness of the Philadelphia Orchestra. The recording itself is good, though far from equaling the astonishing excellence of that given by Columbia this month to the Cleveland Orchestra's magnificent performance of the Shostakovich *Fifth Symphony*.

MUSSORGSKY: *Pictures at an Exhibition* (orch. Ravel) and **GLINKA:** *Kamarinskaya*. Berlin State Opera Orchestra, conducted by Alois Melichar. Four 12" imported records (8 sides) Nos. D-LY6053/6; price \$5.28.

The glittering and sumptuous Ravel orchestration of Mussorgsky's evocative piano pieces—which has unfortunately tempted other orchestrators into imitation—is directly and powerfully set forth by Mr. Melichar and his men in these extraordinary records, now more than six years old. Little that has been accomplished in the practices of recording since they were made has tended to make these discs obsolete. Everyone who loves this music should, first of all, have the forthright performance of the original piano pieces by Alexander Brailovsky (VM-861†). Then, if he admires the orchestral legerdemain of Ravel, he should hear both this Decca-Polydor recording and the superb performance of the same orchestration by Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra (VM-102†).

carefully neglecting the Cailliet and Stokowski versions. Choice between Melichar and Koussevitzky will depend largely on imponderables. The odd side of the Melichar recording is taken up by a brilliant rendition of Glinka's fantasia on two Russian folk songs, *Kamarinskaya*, of which Tchaikovsky said that it contained in embryo the whole Russian school of composers.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV (NIKOLAI ANDREIEVICH)

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Scheherazade*, Opus 35. San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Pierre Monteux. Five 12" records (10 sides) in Set V-M920†; price complete with album \$5.77.

To be released on or about October 15th, this set will be reviewed in the November SUPPLEMENT.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Tsar Saltan—Flight of the Bumble Bee*, Act III, see **IPOLITOV-IVANOV:** *Caucasian Sketches*.

SAINT-SAENS: *Samson et Dalila — Amour, viens aider ma faiblesse*, see **MASSNET:** *Werther — Ces lettres*.

SCHUBERT (FRANZ PETER)

SCHUBERT: *Trio*, B flat major, for piano, violin, and cello, Opus 99. Elly Ney Trio (Elly Ney, piano; Max Strub, violin; Ludwig Hoelscher, cello). Three 12" imported records (6 sides) Nos. D-X157/60; price \$3.96.

In 1826, at the age of twenty-nine, Schubert had but two years more to live. Among the great compositions he turned out that year—which include numbers of superb songs, the *Piano Sonata, G major*, and the *Rondo Brilliant* for piano and violin—the *Trio, B flat major*, is perhaps pre-eminent. When it was first performed at a Schubertiad, one of those singular gatherings of the composer's ardent friends and admirers, the pianist of the occasion jumped up from the piano to kiss the composer, exclaiming that Vienna did not appreciate the treasure it had in him. The music was warmly greeted from the first, and has always been one of the best loved of Schubert's chamber works. It overflows with melodic invention of the most winning sort and, though not without diffuseness, is an altogether satisfying composition.

On these mechanically superior Decca-Polydor records, a truly extraordinary performance is given by Elly Ney, Max Strub, and Ludwig Hoelscher. Americans who may remember Elly Ney as an uneven pianist capable of moments of great playing, but liable to carelessness, will be astonished at the restraint and control of her reading of the piano part. The ensemble work is exquisite, full

of touches of the subtlest emphasis and accent. Recorded with something near to perfection, here is a great chamber work worthily performed. As there is little to choose between this performance and that given by Myra Hess, Yelley D'Aranyi, and Felix Salmond (CM-91), the infinite mechanical superiority of the Elly Ney Trio's version gives it first place.

It should be noted that, keeping the second movement intact on the third record, the manufacturer has placed the brief third movement on the second side of the second record. The sides should therefore be played in the following order: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 4, 7, 8.

SCHUBERT: Trio, B flat major, for piano, violin, and cello, Opus 99. Artur Rubinstein (piano), Jascha Heifetz (violin), and Emanuel Feuermann (cello). Four 12" records (8 sides) in Set V-M923†; price complete with album \$4.72.

To be released on or about October 15th, this set will be reviewed in the November SUPPLEMENT.

SHOSTAKOVICH (DMITRI)

SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 5, Opus 47. Cleveland Orchestra, conducted by Artur Rodzinski. Five 12" records (10 sides) in Set CM-520†; price complete with album \$5.77.

Since Dr. Rodzinski conducted the Shostakovich *Fifth Symphony* in its first American performance — with the NBC Symphony Orchestra, on April 9, 1938 — many listeners have felt that no other interpretation of this music has matched his. It is an unalloyed pleasure to find that spirited, thoughtful, and altogether satisfying reading superbly transferred to records. To set the date at which the Cleveland Orchestra ceased to be one of the many admirable bands and became one of the three or four finest symphonic instruments in the United States would be difficult. No listener to this recording, however, will be able to doubt that he is hearing orchestral performance that is close to perfection. The advantages of a long, continuous tenure of office for a conductor — if he happens to be as excellent an all-round musician as Dr. Rodzinski — are again made manifest.

Comparison of this recording with that of the same work by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Stokowski (VM-619†) is entirely to the advantage of the Clevelanders and Rodzinski. There is little to choose between the sounds produced by the instrumentalists themselves. But the Rodzinski reading reveals whole areas of meaning that Stokowski passed over in what seems to have been a desire to thrill through surface brilliance. Its tempos are just throughout, whereas the Stokowski reading (requiring two more twelve-inch record sides) erred in dragging the beautiful third movement to the edge of bathos.

Columbia's engineers have given superbly transparent recording worthy of the performance, recording that astonishes by the verisimilitude with which it reproduces such "difficult" instruments as celesta and tympani. Here is what may well turn out to be Shostakovich's major composition in performance and recording of the very first rank.

SIBELIUS (JAN)

SIBELIUS: *Finlandia*, Opus 29. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Alois Melichar. 12" imported record (2 sides) No. D-CA8269; price \$1.32.

Now that there are no factitious reasons for playing *Finlandia* constantly, in and out of season, it has become possible again to hear it as music. As such, it is clearly not "important" or even important Sibelius. It is an adroit occasional piece of appreciable melodic richness and well-pointed drama. It was in this spirit that the Melichar recording of it was conceived.

STRAUSS (JOHANN 2nd)

STRAUSS: Emperor Waltz, Opus 437. Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra or New York, conducted by Bruno Walter. 12" record (2 sides) No. C-11854D; price \$1.05.

As was to be expected, Bruno Walter gives a beautifully appropriate reading of the popular *Emperor* (originally *Kaiser*) Waltz. In tempo, rhythm, and dynamics his is a pre-eminently apposite conception of this music. It has become a commonplace to say that the Philharmonic-Symphony sounds like the great orchestra it is when it is worthily conducted. This record attests that truth once more. The recording is one of Columbia's best.

STRAUSS (RICHARD)

STRAUSS: *Ständchen*, Opus 17, No. 2 & *Morgen*, Opus 27, No. 4. Elisabeth Schumann (soprano), with orchestra and (in *Morgen*) violin obbligato by Isolde Menges. 12" imported record (2 sides) No. G-DB1010; price \$2.62.

Recognition of natural limitations and perfection within them is often described as one of the first steps necessary to artistic success. Elisabeth Schumann's frail, pure, and exquisitely handled voice tends to prove the entire validity of that idea. The intelligence and artistic skill that have long made Mme Schumann a great lieder-singer were never better caught on wax than in this recording of two of Richard Strauss' best-known songs. The singing of *Morgen*, in particular, is so entirely right that, under its spell, a better performance becomes unimaginable. Recording and surface are excellent.

TCHAIKOVSKY (PIOTR ILYICH)

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Capriccio Italien*, Opus 45. New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Two 12" records (4 sides) in Set CM-X229†; price complete with album \$2.62.

To be released on or about October 15th, this set will be reviewed in the November SUPPLEMENT.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Nutcracker Suite*, Opus 71a. Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Three 12" records (6 sides) in Set VM-915†; price complete with album \$3.67.

The orchestral suite of eight numbers (Opus 71a) that Tchaikovsky arranged from a small portion of the music for the last of his three ballets, *The Nutcracker* (Opus 71), has never lost its wide popularity. It is delightful entertainment music, full of the subtle touches that go far toward explaining why there are all-Tchaikovsky evenings at the ballet as well as in the concert-hall. Often it is played so shoddily and with such half-hearted attention to its many deft touches of orchestration and design that it becomes not only hackneyed, but also dull. Mr. Ormandy and the Philadelphians have not performed it that way: their reading is carefully thought out. The orchestra itself is as shimmering and sharply defined as it was when—seven years ago, with Stokowski conducting—it made one of its earlier, now out-of-date recordings of the same *Nutcracker Suite* (VM-265†). It has been recorded with an abundance of volume that at moments becomes over-recording.

This is not the ideal version of the *Nutcracker Suite*, nor even the best one to date. Mr. Ormandy, first of all, does not adhere to the fairy-tale spirit of the music. He tends to Wagnerize certain passages, swelling them beyond the size their musical content will bear. His tempos, specifically in the delightful *March*, are often uncertain and inappropriate. A recording better in almost every respect was made a little more than two years ago by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Frederick Stock (CM-395†). The best recording to date is that on Decca-Polydor (D-LY6178/80). The Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra cannot equal the virtuoso perfections of the Philadelphia men. But Paul van Kempen, like Dr. Stock, had a far more appropriate conception of the innate, childhood character of the *Nutcracker Suite* than Mr. Ormandy. And the engineers worked a marvel of transparent recording that few orchestral sets have approached. Lacking the Decca-Polydor set (we have only a limited supply on hand), however, first choice among the available domestic recordings undoubtedly goes to the Columbia Stock-Chicago version.

WAGNER (RICHARD)

WAGNER: *Lohengrin—Einsam in trüben Tagen* (Elsa's Dream), Act I, Scene 2 & *Euch lüften, die mein Klagen*, Act II, Scene 2. Tiana Lemnitz (soprano) with Berlin State Opera Orchestra, conducted by Johannes Schüler. 12" imported record (2 sides) No. D-LY6144; price \$1.32.

We relist herewith one of the prime recordings of a voice that many connoisseurs rate very high among the greatest of our era. Miss Lemnitz possesses an almost unique combination of sensuously lovely tone and deeply probing intelligence. For anyone who enjoys the art of singing, there can be only one reason for avoiding a Lemnitz recording—that it will disappoint him in almost any other soprano he is likely, in a long course of opera-going, to hear. Her projection of Elsa's two moving arias has created an unshakeable standard. The stock of this imported recording is limited, and we cannot guarantee to supply it after the copies on hand are exhausted.

WAGNER: *Die Meistersinger: Wahn, wahn, überall wahn*, Act III, Scene 1. Wilhelm Rode (bass), with orchestra conducted by Manfred Gurlitt. 12" imported record (2 sides) No. D-CA8157; price \$1.32.

The great *Wahnmonolog* of Hans Sachs from the third act of *Die Meistersinger* is here sung with real distinction. The balance between voice and orchestra is nicely gauged, and the recording is of the highest European standard of a few years back. The many who feel that *Die Meistersinger* is Wagner's most truly realized opera, and Hans Sachs the greatest of his character creations, will find nothing in this record to disillusion or disappoint them. This is a recording of rare good qualities.

WAGNER: *Die Meistersinger: Was duftet doch der Flieder & Verachtet mir die Meister nicht*, Act III. Theodor Scheidl (bass), with orchestra. 12" imported record (2 sides) No. D-LY6140; price \$1.32.

An unusually rich and round bass-baritone voice has here been used by Mr. Scheidl with intelligence and artistry to body forth two of the most beautiful passages from the third act of *Die Meistersinger*. The anonymous orchestra and conductor supporting him do full justice to his carefully worked-out characterization. Wagnerian bass roles are so often, on the opera stage, sung either raucously or inaudibly that it is always a rare treat to hear excerpts from Hans Sachs' music performed as well as this. The recording is entirely adequate.

WALDTEUFEL (EMIL)

WALDTEUFEL: *Estudiantina Waltz*. Boston "Pops" Orchestra, conducted by Arthur Fiedler. 12" record (2 sides) No. V-10-1024; price 79c.

To be released on or about October 15th, this record will be reviewed in the November SUPPLEMENT.

COLLECTIONS

FIGHTING MEN OF NORWAY. Zion Norwegian Lutheran Chorus, directed by Agnes Forde, with Keynote Orchestra and vocal soloists. Three 10" records (6 sides) in Set K-114; price complete with album \$2.89.

The selections recorded in this stirring album are: *Ja, vi elsker* (the national anthem of Norway), *Vaar Gud han er saa fast en borg* (Luther's *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*), *Vi vil oss et land* (by Christian Sinding), *Norske Flygere* (a song of aviators in the present war), *Alt for Norge*, and *Hjemmefrontens Sang*. The accompanying booklet, with parallel columns of text in Norwegian and English, contains a salutation from King Haakon VII and the texts of all the songs. The recording is good.

GLADYS SWARTHOUT IN OPERATIC ARIAS.

Gladys Swarthout (contralto). Two 12" records (4 sides) in Set V-M925; price complete with album \$2.62. This set contains:

GOUNOD: *Roméo et Juliette—Que fais-tu*, Act III (Stephano's aria)

GOUNOD: *Faust—Faites-lui mes aveux*, Act III (Siebel's aria)

THOMAS: *Mignon—Connais-tu le pays*, Act I, and *Je connais un pauvre enfant*, Act II

To be released on or about October 15th, this set will be reviewed in the November SUPPLEMENT.

KURT BAUM SINGS IN ENGLISH. Kurt Baum (tenor), with piano accompaniment. Two 10" records (4 sides) in Set BA-4; price complete with de luxe folder \$2.62.

Kurt Baum, who made a promising Metropolitan debut last season as the Italian Singer in *Der Rosenkavalier*, sings the following:

Scriabin-Guenther: *When the Nightingale Has Ceased to Sing* (freely transcribed from the *Etude*, Opus 2, No. 1.)

Borodin-Guenther: *The Songs You Sang* (freely transcribed from part of the *Polovtsian Dances* from *Prince Igor*)

Sibelius-Arman: *Finlandia* (freely transcribed from part of the tone poem of the same name)

Liszt-Guenther: *Dream of Love* (freely transcribed from the *Liebestraum* No. 3)

MARA AND HER RUSSIAN ENSEMBLE. Mara (contralto, in Russian), with her instrumental ensemble, conducted by Rudolph Goehr. Two 10" records (4 sides) in Set BA-1; price complete with de luxe folder \$2.62.

The selections in this album are: *Moonlight on the River* (waltz); *Bells of Moscow* (tango); *Farewell* (Gypsy song), and *Remember* (Gypsy song).

OLD ENGLISH AIRS. Gordon String Quartet. Three 10" records (6 sides) in Set D-270; price complete with album \$2.89.

The selections in this album played by the Gordon String Quartet (now consisting of Jacques Gordon, Samuel Weiss, William Lincer, and Fritz Magg) are: *Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes*, *Lord Randal*, *Barbara Allen*, *Green Sleeves*, *Cherry Ripe*, and *Sally in Our Alley*. The arrangers of the first four are not specified, but the last two were arranged by Frank Bridge. The performances are good, the recording inferior because of poor surfaces.

DICTION

JOHN PEALE BISHOP READING HIS POEMS.

10" record (2 sides) No. CPS-65-6; price \$1.57.

Mr. Bishop here reads the following from his books *Selected Poems* and *Now with His Love: Apparition; The Return; Moving Landscape with Falling Rain*, and *Metamorphoses of M.*

LEONIE ADAMS READING HER POEMS. 10" record (2 sides) No. CPS-63-4; price \$1.57.

Léonie Adams here reads the following from her book *High Falcon and Other Poems: Bell Towers* (one of the most remarkable metaphysical poems of our time); *The River in the Meadows*; *Harvest*; *Time and Spirit*; *The Horn*, and *The Mount*.

EDUCATIONAL

COLUMBUS AND HIS CREW (History Speaks: No. 3). Columbia Players. 10" record (2 sides) No. C-36639; price 52c.

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER (History Speaks: No. 4). Columbia Players. 10" record (2 sides) No. C-36648; price 52c.

These records of pseudo-historical "dramas with music" continue the series begun with *Dewey at Manila* (C-36619) and *Betsy Ross Showing the First Flag* (C-36630).

POPULAR ALBUMS

A PROGRAM OF DINNER MUSIC. The Palmer House Ensemble, directed by Ralph Ginsburgh. Four 10" records (8 sides) in Set V-P127; price complete with album \$2.62.

The pieces here recorded are: *By the Sleepy Lagoon*, *Sizilietta*, *Nocturne in E Flat (Chopin)*, *The Maids of Cadiz*, *Come Back to Sorrento*, *Gavotte from Mignon*, and *Chopin Fantasy* (made up of six pieces).

CARLOS GARDEL-TANGOS. Carlos Gardel, accompanied by guitars and orchestra. Four 10" records (8 sides) in Set D-333; price complete with album \$2.62.

One of the internationally renowned interpreters of Argentine tangos, Carlos Gardel here sings the following: *La Canción de Buenos Aires*, *La Cumparsita*, *Caminito*, *Lo Han Visto Con Otra*, *Tomo y Obligo*, *Mano a Mano*, *Madreselva*, and *Silencio*.

CAROL BRUCE SOUVENIR ALBUM. Carol Bruce, with orchestra directed by Victor Young. Four 10" records (8 sides) in Set D-325; price complete with album \$2.62.

Carol Bruce sings the following: *Misirlou*, *Red Moon of the Caribbees*, *The Lamp of Memory*, *Adiós*, *Carioca*, *Rain in Spain*, *My Shawl*, and *A Rendezvous in Rio*.

FIESTA IN CHILE, BOLIVIA, AND PERU. Juan Arvizu, Pedro Colque and His Typical Bolivian Group, Valente, Cáceres and Frances. Three 10" records (6 sides) in Set V-P132; price complete with album \$2.10.

These selections from the music of some of our less familiar South American neighbors includes: *El Cura de Mi Pueblo*, *Mantelito Blanco*, *Ay! Ay! Ay!*, *La Vicuñita*, *Gato Libre*, and *Margarita*.

FIESTA IN CUBA. Carlos Molina and His Orchestra, Pedro Vargas, Antonio Machin, and the Victor Cuban Orchestra. Three 10" records (6 sides) in Set V-P129; price complete with album \$2.10.

This album is accompanied by a leaflet giving the Spanish and English texts of the songs, which are: *Negra Consentida*, *El Manicero (The Peanut Vendor)*, *Siboney*, *Ahora Seremos Felices*, *Piruli*, and *Quiéreme Mucho*.

HILDEGARDE—"BY JUPITER." Hildegard, with orchestra directed by Harry Sosnick. Two 10" records (4 sides) in Set D-326; price complete with album \$1.95.

In this set of hits from the Rodgers and Hart musical, the popular Hildegard sings: *Careless Rhapsody*, *Jupiter Forbid*, *Ev'rything I've Got*, and *Nobody's Heart*.

NURSERY RHYMES AND NOVELTY SONGS.

The King's Men (male quartet), with instrumental accompaniment. Four 10" records (8 sides) in Set D-329; price complete with album \$2.62.

The Chool Song, *Old Dan Tucker*, *Three Blind Mice*, *Polly Put the Kettle On*, *Old Macdonald Had a Farm*, *Old King Cole*, *Li'l Liza Jane*, and *Simple Simon* are here given the distinctive treatment of The King's Men.

STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER. Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians, with glee club and soloists. Four 10" records (8 sides) in Set D-345; price complete with album \$2.62.

This stirring patriotic collection is made up of: *The Stars and Stripes Forever*, *America Calling*, *Anchors Aweigh*, *Song for the Unsung*, *Roll Tanks Roll*, *Look Out Below*, *The Fighting Quartermaster Corps*, and *We've Got a Job to Do*.

TEDDY WILSON AND HIS PIANO. Teddy Wilson (piano). Four 10" records (8 sides) in Set C-93; price complete with album \$2.62.

The selections in this album are: *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*, *Them There Eyes*, *These Foolish Things*, *Rosetta*, *I Can't Get Started*, *I Know that You Know*, *Body and Soul*, and *China Boy*.

THE RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL GLEE CLUB.

The Radio City Music Hall Glee Club, directed by Irving Landau. Four 10" records (8 sides) in Set V-P126; price complete with album \$2.62.

In the style that has always characterized their singing, the chorus of the Radio City Music Hall presents: *Ol' Man River*, *Song of the Haulers*, *Russian Soldiers' Song*, *All the Things You Are*, *Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho*, *Perfidia*, *Serenade (Toselli)*, and *With a Song in My Heart*.

THIS IS THE ARMY. Original All-Soldier Cast, with orchestra and chorus directed by Corporal Milton Rosenstock. Four 10" records (8 sides) in Set D-340; price complete with album \$2.62.

This interesting album will be an invaluable souvenir of the all-soldier review that has just closed in New York after being the unquestioned smash hit of the season. The original cast presents not only the hit songs, but the colorful interludes that went to make the show memorable. And—not least of all—Irving Berlin himself sings that immortal plaint, *Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning!*

YANKEE DOODLE DANDY. Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians, with glee club and soloists. Three 10" records (6 sides) in Set D-330; price complete with album \$2.10.

In this set of renowned George M. Cohan hit songs—all of them featured in the remarkable cinema biography, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, the Waring forces present the following: *Mary's a Grand Old Name*, *Harrigan*, *The Yankee Doodle Boy*, *You Remind Me of My Mother*, *So Long Mary*, *You're a Grand Old Flag*, and *Over There*.

YOUR HIT PARADE. Mark Warnow and his Orchestra, Barry Wood, Joan Edwards, and The Hit Paraders. Four 10" records (8 sides) in Set V-P121; price complete with album \$2.62.

Containing a brace of all-time favorites, this set is made up of: *The Music Goes 'Round and 'Round*, *Cocktails for Two*, *These Foolish Things*, *The Woodpecker Song*, *All the Things You Are*, *I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire*, *Ti-pi-tin*, and *Where or When*.

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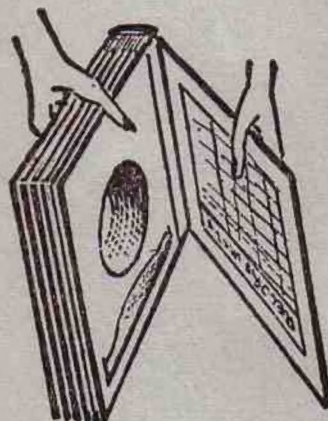
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